



# WASHINGTON WATCH

THE NEWS FROM REP. KEN CALVERT, 43RD DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

Dear Students:

On November 18, 1999, Congress made history by stopping the 30-year raid on Social Security while balancing the federal budget. When Republicans gained the majority in both the House and Senate in 1995, deficits stretched further than the eye could see and the Social Security Trust Fund was being used as a government slush fund. The welfare system hurt more people than it helped, high taxes had a stranglehold on the economy, and military readiness was seriously in question. Those problems were magnified by a bureaucracy that misdirected education dollars from the classroom.

The last five years we have worked diligently to change all of that - to restore America to the people - so that they can control their own lives. What we have discovered is the power of a simple idea: Freedom works! With more freedom comes greater security! If parents, communities, and local and state governments are given the freedom to make their own decisions, then the outcome is a better and stronger America. I hope you will take the time to read this brief newsletter and let me know what you think.

Sincerely,

Ken Calvert  
Member of Congress

## The Appropriations Process

Over the last few months, many of you have heard a lot of terms being thrown around in the media when describing the nation's budget status, such as: appropriations and continuing resolution. The terms sound forbidding, and yet they are vital to the continued smooth functioning of the U.S. Government. Let's begin with the basic understanding of the budget process and how it ensures the functioning of our nation.

The federal government operates on a fiscal year cycle at the end of which Congress must consider 13 annual, or more, appropriations bills which provide for activities such as national defense, education, anti-crime and social programs, and general government operations. This exercise of power is granted to the Congress under the Constitution, which states, "No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law" (Article I, Section 9). The power to appropriate is exclusively a legislative branch power. The executive branch may not spend more than the amount appropriated, and it may use available funds only for the purposes established by Congress. To that end, Congress has developed certain rules and practices that are followed during the consideration of appropriations measures — referred to commonly as the appropriations process.

There are three types of appropriations bills that may be utilized during the so called "process" - or the way in which these 13 annual pieces of legislation are approved by Congress and signed by the President of the United States. Regular appropriations bills are the most widely used vehicles and dictate how much money is given to various programs under federal government control. If regular bills are not enacted by a given deadline of September 30, Congress adopts continuing resolutions. Continuing resolutions allow

the continued functioning of essential activities by the federal government until the regular bills are enacted. Supplemental bills are considered later and provide additional funding to selected programs beyond the regular appropriations bills.

The President also has an important role in the appropriations process by virtue of his constitutional power to approve or veto entire appropriations bills and his various duties imposed by statute. Those statutes establish that the President start the appropriations process by submitting his annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year to Congress. Congress provides spending for fiscal years, in contrast to calendar years. Fiscal years begin on October 1 and end the following September 30. The President is required to submit his annual budget on or before the first Monday in February.

In the President's budget, he recommends spending levels for the various programs and agencies of the federal government. The agencies of the federal government then provide detailed justification materials (explanations for funding) to the House and Senate committees, which have jurisdiction over funding for the various agencies.

### **Below lists a general appropriations timetable following the President's annual budget submission to Congress:**

- The House of Representatives  
Appropriations Committee begins reporting bills in May or June to be voted-on by the full House (all 435 members) completing most of them by August.
- The Senate Appropriations Committee begins reporting the regular appropriations bills to the full Senate in June or July. They begin voting on the bills and complete most of them by the end of September.
- Differences between the Senate and House-passed versions are then settled by the two chambers in conference meetings.

■ Conference meetings leave relatively little or no time before the fiscal year begins to resolve what may be wide differences between House and Senate, to say nothing of those between Congress and the President. Therefore, Congress must usually enact one or more temporary continuing resolutions until the regular appropriations bills are finished. However, when the Members of Congress involved in the conference

meetings do reach an agreement, the report is then brought back to the full House and Senate for reconsideration. The appropriations bill cannot be sent to the President until both houses of Congress have agreed to the entire text of the bill.

■ After Congress sends the bill to the President, he has 10 days to sign or veto the bill. If he takes neither of

these actions, the bill automatically becomes law at the end of the 10-day period. If the President vetoes the bill, he sends it back to Congress. Congress may override the veto by a 2/3 majority vote in both houses of Congress. If Congress successfully overrides the veto, the bill becomes law. However, if unsuccessful, the bill dies and they must begin the process again for that particular bill. ■

---

## Everyone Counts

### Why we have a U.S. Census

In March 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau will mail out questionnaires to more than 120 million households. The 2000 Census will become the largest peacetime effort in the history of the United States, as it works to establish partnerships with state, local and tribal governments along with private industry, local governments and community groups. Their goal is to increase awareness, dispel common myths and increase the number of responses to the census. In this newsletter I will give you a brief history of the census and answer some commonly asked questions.

### What is the History of the Census?

The Romans were the first known empire to count their inhabitants at regular intervals. The earliest known censuses were conducted for purposes of levying taxes or for military service. The first true census in modern times began in 1665 in the colony of New France and the practice of census-taking began to spread throughout the world.

In the early 1600's in the Americas, a census was taken in Virginia, and people were counted in nearly all of the British colonies that became the United States. The U.S. Constitution dictated the first U.S. Census in 1790 (Article I, Sec II). It provided that the census be taken every ten years to apportion seats in the House of Representatives and to direct taxes among the states. The number of Representatives representing each state is determined by population, and is updated every ten years according to the U.S.

Census. District lines are then redrawn by each state legislature, adding or subtracting House seats as needed. Members are elected by the people for 2-year terms, all terms running for the same period. Slaves were counted as three-fifths of a person and untaxed Indians were not counted at all. The population for the first census was 3.9 million. In 1870, with the end of slavery, the three-fifths count for African-Americans was discontinued with Article XIV of the U.S. Constitution.

By 1881, an electric sorting and tabulating machine was invented by engineer Herman Hollerith to compile census data more efficiently – in the past data was tabulated by hand. The 1880 census had taken nearly eight years to complete. Hollerith's electronic tabulating machine completed the 1890 census in a record-breaking one year! This generated considerable publicity for the inventor and led to the establishment of his own company the Tabulating Machine Corporation which later became the International Business Machine Corporation (IBM). You could say that Hollerith's punch card system was the beginning of the computer industry.

### How Other People Use the Census

Government officials aren't the only ones who use census information. People from many walks of life use census data to advocate for causes, for research, advertising, prevent disease and even rescue disaster victims.

When Hurricane Andrew hit south Florida in 1992, census information aided the rescue effort by providing relief workers with

estimates of the number of people missing in each block, as well as detailed maps of whole blocks of neighborhoods that had been obliterated.

### What the Census Bureau Isn't Telling Anyone

The Census Bureau's policy on confidentiality dates back 150 years. Federal law mandates that no one outside the Census Bureau can give out information that would enable someone to connect your answers with your name and address, including the Internal Revenue Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. If they violate their oath, there is a sizable fine (up to \$5,000) and a prison term (up to five years).

### Will They Be Missed?

Census takers will be interviewing people from every walk of life and will attempt to count all residents, both citizens and non-citizens, and those without housing. They will interview people in emergency and transitional shelters, soup kitchens, regularly-scheduled mobile food vans and targeted outdoor locations. Census takers will also find areas where migrant and seasonal farm workers live and work, including unregistered labor camps, vehicles parked near work sites and living areas along unmarked roads. They will also interview people staying at campgrounds, fairs, carnivals and marinas. All ocean-going vessels, military installments, military ships and people stationed overseas will also be counted.